



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/696,446	10/29/2003	Donald H. Gehring	032531.004	5986

7590 09/03/2004

James E. Bradley  
Bracewell & Patterson, L.L.P.  
P.O. Box 61389  
Houston, TX 77208-1389

EXAMINER

SOTELO, JESUS D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3617

DATE MAILED: 09/03/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/696,446

Applicant(s)

GEHRING, DONALD H.

Examiner

Jesús D. Sotelo

Art Unit

3617

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 12-17 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6, 11 and 18-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 7-10 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 29 October 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/2/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_.

**DETAILED ACTION**

1. Claims 1-20 are in the application.
2. On page 9, line 5 of section [00025], "35" should be changed to --33--.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nandakumar et al.

Nandakumar et al discloses an offshore platform having a flat bottom, a plurality of flat sides, at least one aperture in the bottom and at the top that are vertically aligned and a conduit extending between the top and bottom for the passage of a riser 26

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nandakumar et al in view of Allen et al.

Allen discloses a similar offshore platform with a riser extending through the top and bottom surfaces. Allen et al teaches providing the offshore platform with a ballast member 18 to provide the platform with stability. In view of these disclosures, it would

Art Unit: 3617

have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the platform of Nandakumar with a counterweight at the bottom thereof to provide the platform with stability generally as taught by Allen et al. Although Nandakumar et al discloses a platform having only six sides, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the platform with more than six sides in view of Nandakumar et al teachings of forming multiple surfaces on the platform.

7. Claims 4-6, 11, and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Key et al in view of Nandakumar et al and Allen et al.

Key et al discloses a platform generally as claimed except that it does not include flat sides and it does not include a counterweight. Nandakumar et al teaches making an offshore platform with multiple flat sides. Allen et al teaches providing an offshore platform with a counterweight to improve stability. In view of these disclosures, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the outer surface of the platform of Key et al with a plurality of flat surfaces, generally as taught by Nandakumar et al and with a counterweight to improve stability, generally as taught by Allen et al.

***Allowable Subject Matter***


8. Claims 7-10 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
9. Claims 12-17 are allowed.

Art Unit: 3617

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jesús D. Sotelo whose telephone number is 703-308-2563. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. - Fri. 6:00 AM -2:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Samuel J. Morano can be reached on 703-308-0230. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
*Jesús D. Sotelo 9/1/04*  
**Primary Examiner**  
**Art Unit 3617**  
CPK 5-6D16 ☺

sotelo;jds  
September 1, 2004